

Luke—"He led them (the apostles) out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them." The lifting up of the hands has from very early times been associated with prayer, intercession, and blessing. In the war against Amalek, when the hands of Moses were held up, Israel prevailed. At the dedication of the temple, Solomon "spread forth his hands toward heaven." The acts of prayer and blessing in divine service are still accompanied with the lifting of the hands. "I will therefore," says St. Paul to Timothy, "that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." We can not always stretch out our hands to help others. We can not always lay hands on them, or take them by the hand. But we can always help them by lifting up our hands in prayer and blessing, and remembering their needs before the throne of God. It was to his young scholars at St. Paul's Grammar School that the good Dean Colet wrote, "Lift up your little white hands for me." None are too humble to help in this ministry.

All these actions bring vividly before us our Savior's tireless industry. He was always busy, never idle. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day." These words are a rebuke to our idleness and sloth. At one time it was thought beneath the dignity of any one but a slave to work with the hands. Manual labor was despised. Pen and sword were deemed the only honorable implements for the hand. But we never hear of our Lord's making use of either. Even in our sense of the word he was a "working man,"—"Jesus the Carpenter of Nazareth."

Those hands were, moreover, always at the service of others. Never was the phrase, "a helping hand," better illustrated than in Jesus. His hands could perform the most exalted or the most lowly services. He could raise them to bless his disciples, or lower them to wash their feet. And the Christian spirit will always show itself in the same way. Be willing to be of use. Be glad to do a service. Count it a privilege to help others.

There came a time when these blessed hands were powerless. They were bound, pierced, stretched on the cross. The Savior was delivered into the hands of wicked men. The hand of him that betrayed him was on the table. The false disciple dipped his hand with him in the dish. Cruel men smote him with the palms of their hands. His judge washed his hands of him. Soldiers' hands scourged him and nailed him to the tree. Yet he proved himself our Savior in standing still and suffering evil, even more than when he went about doing good. He that can suffer is he that can succor; he that can bear is he that can save. And until we, too, learn that final lesson for ourselves, our hands are not like his. We must bear on our body the marks of the Lord Jesus. We must have, as St. Francis deemed he had, the sacred stigmata. To work, as Christ did, for others, is a great thing. To suffer, as Christ did, for others, is a greater thing. And our hands must be heady for both.—*Life and Work*, Edinburgh, Scotland.

There are no languishing churches where souls are saved.

The Quiet Hour

PRAYER.

Our Father in Heaven, as we study thy dealings with thy children in the past, and as we meditate upon thy dealings with ourselves, we are lost in wonder at the magnitude of thy seeking and redeeming love. How wondrous is thy compassion and how far-reaching thy mercy. In the Son of Man coming to seek and to save the lost we see the expression of thy great yearning, loving heart. Hear us, our Father, as we confess our sin and lay hold of Jesus for pardon and for cleansing. Deliver us, not only from the guilt of sin, but from its enslaving power. We pray for the joy of heart purity, that we may be delivered from the domination of evil in our hearts. Create in us clean hearts and renew right spirits within us, and make us to know the joy and gladness of those whose hearts are at one with thee. Amen.

OUR BEST FOR GOD.

It is not wise for a man to waste too much time comparing his several performances. There will naturally be some better than others; but the inferior work is not always a proof of carelessness, or even a sign of deterioration, but simply one of the many incidents common to our earth and our humanity.

The Lord of Life, whose verdict alone is final, never fails to consider the circumstances; and in the great judgment it may appear that some magnificent deeds fell short of being the best; and some very inferior performances were in deed and truth the very best possible to the agent at the time. Let us not fret if the day finds our strength weaker or our hand less skillful, but simply try each day in the fear of God to do the best we can with the strength and the tools that the day has brought, only careful of this, that we never offer our God or our race indifferent or half-hearted work.

Emotion has no value in the Christian system save as it stands connected with right conduct as the cause of it. Emotion is the bud, not the flower, and never is it of value until it expands into a flower. Every religious sentiment, every act of devotion which does not produce a corresponding elevation of life, is worse than useless; it is absolutely pernicious, because it ministers to self-deception and tends to lower the line of personal morals.—W. H. H. Murray.

We set out in the morning with purposes of usefulness, of true living, of gentle-heartedness, of patience, of victoriousness; but in the evening we find only fragments of these good intentions wrought out. But God's intentions are all carried out. No power can withstand him or balk his will. It was in this thought that Job found peace in his long sore trial. All things were in God's hands, and nothing could hinder his designs of love. Our God is infinitely strong. In all earthly confusions, strifes, and troubles, his hand moves, bringing good out of evil for those who trust him. He can execute all his purposes of good. He is never hindered in blessing his children.—J. R. Miller.